

I N T E R O F F I C E M E M O R A N D U M

Date: 01-Oct-1990 02:54pm EDT
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Subject: Chris Brown and Environmental Hypersensitivity

This is a response to the EM from Peter Finkle regarding the phone conversation with Chris Brown.

I believe the "chemical sensitivity" report he refers to is the report by Claudia S. Miller, M.D. and Nicholas Ashford, J.D. and Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, commissioned by the New Jersey State Health Department. The report does not pertain specifically to psychiatric patients.

There was a man in Timmins () who had been diagnosed with sensitivities and who had applied to ComSoc for income support which was denied. His case was turned down on appeal and he just couldn't face further life hassles in general and took his own life. Chris Brown refers to this case in all of his conversations with me, as well.

In the past, OHIP paid out-of-province treatment for hypersensitivity when there was an environmental unit in Dallas, Texas. The unit no longer exists and OHIP is, therefore, no longer paying for this treatment. The experience of patients indicates that treatment in the unit relieved symptoms temporarily. When persons returned to their home environment, their health deteriorated substantially over time. The efficacy of such treatment is therefore under review and our Advisory Committee is advocating research on this issue.

Health and Welfare has had no such evaluation of the Zimmerman Report. Nor is the Z report a polemic. I attended a seminar in Ottawa in May and had a number of conversations with officials regarding the MOH stance. The reason hypersensitivity is problematic is that the term refers to a whole range of not well-defined symptoms. No one has stated that environmental effects do not exist. As an example, one can cite non-smoking policies that apply to many human environments and the reasons for them.

Anna Rose